

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Summary of Lake Berryessa Community Forum Meeting

Date: May 22, 2013

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Capell Valley Fire Station, 1193 Capell Valley Road, Napa, CA 94558

Current Status of Recreation Services: Lake Berryessa Park Manager Jeff Laird provided updates on recreation services that are currently available at the lake. An interim contract for Markley Cove Resort starts on May 27, 2013, and will continue through December 31, 2014, with two 1-year option periods. Markley Cove offers cabins, day use, boat launching, boat rentals, slip rentals, fuel and a general store. Pleasure Cove Marina remains under a long-term contract until 2040 and offers tent and RV camping, cabins, day use, boat launching, boat and houseboat rentals, slip rentals, fuel and a general store. Steele Canyon Recreation Area 707-966-9179 and Spanish Flat Recreation Area 707-966-9192 are now operating under an interim contract with Pleasure Cove Marina LLC until December 31, 2013, with two 1-year option periods. Both areas offer tent and RV camping with a boat launch available at Steele Canyon. Berryessa Point and Monticello Shores Recreation Areas will remain closed until a long-term contract is awarded. Putah Canyon Recreation Area will very soon be under an interim contract with Royal Elk Park Management to offer tent and RV camping and a boat launch. All of Oak Shores Day Use Area is now open for day use as of May 19. Other Reclamation facilities, including Capell Cove Launch and day use areas at Olive Orchard, Eticuera, and Smittle Creek, are open. The Visitor Center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and noon to 3 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Jeff Laird stated that the rates used by the interim contract have been approved by Reclamation and were evaluated using the Fee Comparability method. Annual boat launch and day use passes under the interim contracts will be site specific and are sold on a calendar year basis, i.e. a boat launch pass sold anytime in 2013 will expire on Dec 31, 2013. There will not be a pro-rated price for these passes if they are sold later in the year.

Recreation Services Contracts: A contract for six double-vault toilets has been awarded, no date of installation has been determined. Two each of the double-vault toilets will be installed at Putah Canyon, Steele Canyon and Spanish Flat Recreation Areas. A well-drilling proposal will be forthcoming for Putah Canyon and Monticello Shores Recreation Areas. A concession improvement contract (including RV dump station, limited water distribution for Putah Canyon and Monticello Shores, and slope stabilization at Spanish Flat) is forthcoming. A contract for tables, grills and fire rings to replace those currently rented from Pensus has been awarded. A contract for launch docks at Putah Canyon and Steele Canyon is prepared for bids. A contract for security at Putah Canyon, Monticello Shores and Berryessa Point has been awarded to Comprehensive Security Systems and starts on Friday, May 24, 2013, through September 30, 2013. A project agreement has been signed with Tuleyome for rehabilitation of the North End Trail. Reclamation is working with Napa County and the Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce to develop a sign plan to direct visitors to recreation areas. Community Forum Coordinating Team members stressed that the existing launch docks at Putah Canyon and Steele Canyon are too short and in poor shape and urged that the relevant contract be moved forward with haste.

Process to Move Forward with Request for Proposals and Long-term Contracts: Acting Central California Area Office Area Manager Drew Lessard provided an update on the process of awarding long-term contracts for concession operations at Lake Berryessa. As identified at previous meetings, Reclamation will pursue a process stressing preplanning and conceptual design prior to issuing a prospectus. Reclamation is identifying a schedule and will provide additional detail at the next Forum meeting. Reclamation is tentatively planning for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for the conceptual design to begin in approximately December 2013 and intends to hold this scoping meeting in lieu of a standard Forum meeting. Reclamation would use consultants to conduct the NEPA environmental evaluation, the Architectural and Engineering study and the financial feasibility study. Drew Lessard indicated that the 2006 Visitor Services Plan/Record of Decision is an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA but that it did not contain site-specific information that needs to be addressed in another environmental document, which would include scoping sessions and public comment. Community Forum Coordinating Team members expressed concern that additional review may still be needed prior to construction starting or that additional review would be needed for additional services not required in the long-term concession contract. Drew Lessard explained that for those items required in the contract, the environmental review will be conducted in two parts. The current plan involves Reclamation conducting the environmental evaluation for the initial site plans up to the 35 percent design level for services and possibly a higher level of design for infrastructure, and successful concession contractors will conduct the environmental evaluation for the site-specific designs for visitor services at the 95/100 percent design level.

Reclamation's Activities for Fire Management for the 2013 Season: Jeff Laird described fire prevention activities that Reclamation has undertaken. Reclamation staff prepared concession areas for interim operators in accordance with instructions received from CalFire and Napa County. Reclamation mowed and weedeated 25 feet around fire rings including clearing 5 feet of bare mineral soil around each fire ring. Trees were trimmed to 10 feet above fire rings. Spanish Flat Recreation Area was inspected, and CalFire representatives were satisfied. CalFire requires a shovel at each fire ring or a mobile 150-gallon water tank and a pump for minor fires. Pleasure Cove LLC will have a 500-gallon tank and fire extinguishers at Steele Canyon and Spanish Flat. Putah Canyon will have a 150-gallon tank with fire extinguishers. Reclamation is requesting that CalFire offer training to concessionaires about fire basics. Reclamation has mowed and weedeated grass to less than 4 inches around BBQs in areas that Reclamation directly manages. CalFire crews have been working on the east side of the lake with hand-lines and will bring in a dozer for other work in connection with the second year of a controlled burn invasive plant management project on the east side of the lake. Dependent upon weather and fire crew availability, that burn activity is anticipated to take place June 18-20. Community Forum Coordinating Team members expressed concern that Reclamation staff should be equipped with some basic fire prevention equipment.

Management Issues for the East Side: Community Forum Coordinating Team members provided the following issues related to Lake Berryessa's east side for future discussion at the Community Forum: (1) Exploring allowing grazing permits on Reclamation lands on the east side, (2) monitoring and the status of compliance of the management agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, (3) visitor access and use of the road on the east side, (4) threat of fire from extensive fuels buildup in the wildlife area, (5) controlled burn projects on the east side, and (6) active management of the resources on the east side. Reclamation has contacted the California Department of Fish and Wildlife who has agreed to attend a future Community Forum meeting to address concerns with their management of the wildlife area.

Future Meeting/Potential Topics: East side management concerns and issues and the Trail Management Plan were both mentioned as potential future topics, along with the progress on the long-term concession contracts. Members of the Community Forum Coordinating Team indicated that meetings do not necessarily have to be monthly, and that the upcoming recreation season will keep Reclamation staff busy. The consensus was to hold the next meeting sometime in July or August.

Public Comments:

Public comments at the meeting raised concerns with the status of the agreement to secure either ownership or use of the roads and boat ramp at Steele Canyon; with reservations and camping options in the concession areas under interim contracts; with additional concerns about management, grazing and access on the east side; with the mowing of dispersed access areas; with the process for soliciting long-term concession contractors; and with the need to address future recreational opportunities and services in the concession areas.

Next meeting date, time and location are to be determined.

For questions or comments regarding Lake Berryessa, contact Park Manager Jeff Laird, either by email (JLaird@usbr.gov), mail (Lake Berryessa Office, Park Manager, 5520 Knoxville Road., Napa CA 94558) or by phone (707-966-2111, ext 0).

For additional information, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa> and click on “Recreation Updates” in the light-blue navigation column on the left.